

HOUSE RESOLUTION 64
By Godsey

A RESOLUTION To honor Pastor Joe W. Byrd of Bloomingdale Baptist Church for achieving the milestone of fifty years in the ministry.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly are proud to recognize those members of the cloth whose devout service to God and their communities has instilled in others the faith to follow His spiritual path; and

WHEREAS, Joe W. Byrd is one such distinguished citizen who radiates God's love and evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; through his great capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, he has enriched the lives of the people in his community for fifty years as the pastor of Bloomingdale Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, A resident of Sullivan County since 1928, Joe W. Byrd is the son of the late Evangelist A. R. Byrd, Sr. and Gussie Catherine Byrd; the eldest of seven children, he developed a love of his Lord and his Christian family at an early age; and

WHEREAS, As a young man, he answered the call of duty during World War II as one of the many gallant citizen soldiers who protected and ensured the freedom of this nation and our world; having served as a reconnaissance sergeant in the First Army, he is a member of the group that has rightfully come to be known as our nation's "Greatest Generation"; and

WHEREAS, A few short years following the war, Bloomingdale Baptist Church invited him to become their Pastor and, on April 1, 1951, he was ordained as the congregation's pastor; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Byrd came to Bloomingdale without any previous ministry experience or formal training, but he was blessed with an unquestioned heart for God's work and a magnetic personality; although he originally planned to serve Bloomingdale for approximately three months, the congregation is still benefiting from his wisdom and love more than a half century after he first stood at the pulpit; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his exemplary tenure as Pastor of Bloomingdale Baptist Church, Joe W. Byrd has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and an exceptional asset to his community; he is a 41-year member of Hammond Post #3 of the American Legion and a life member of Veterans of Foreign War Post 3382; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Byrd is also a member of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge; Post 38 of the Disabled American Veterans, Masonic Lodge 688, Lynn Bachmann Chapter #195, Kingsport Council #177, and Kingsport Commandry #33 and a life sponsor of the Knights Temple Eyes Foundation; and

WHEREAS, For several years, Pastor Byrd has served as Chaplain of the Color Guard of the American Legion Hammond Post #3; during that time, he has officiated at more than 1,500 military funerals, providing a last deserved tribute to the noble men and women who have bravely served this country, and his wisdom and compassion have been well utilized at more than 2,500 funerals in all; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, Pastor Byrd has had the honor of performing nearly one thousand weddings; he has had the joy of watching God's kingdom expand as he has baptized more than 900 individuals and received 645 others into the church by letter and other additions; and

WHEREAS, Joe W. Byrd is committed to the highest ideals of family values; he is most grateful for the tremendous love and companionship that he has shared with his beloved wife, Eileen, since they were first united in holy matrimony on September 12, 1942, and he is the proud and devoted father of Teresa Byrd Hoskins, Stephen Byrd, Yvonne Byrd Taylor, and Ronald L. Byrd; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Joe W. Byrd's outstanding career as a dynamic and compassionate pastor and as an active civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on God's grace, the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and, his uncommon ability to relate to people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, An unwavering commitment to the work of his Creator and Savior, the betterment of the lives of his congregation, and the welfare of all of humanity are hallmarks of the life and career of Pastor Byrd; and

WHEREAS, It is not often that a man of Joe W. Byrd's stature walks among us, and it is important that we honor him for his strong character and selfless good works, also recognizing him for his life of purpose and commitment to God; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor and commend Joe W. Byrd for his fifty years of meritorious service to his Lord as Pastor of Bloomingdale Baptist Church, reflecting fondly upon his inscrutable character and many invaluable contributions to this State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we wish him much happiness and success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.